

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) on Tuesday attended a press conference announcing the introduction of Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act, a bill introduced by Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.).

The legislation, known as the Comprehensive Immigration Reform ASAP Act, is aimed at putting immigration on the front burner for 2010.

Following introduction of the bill, Rep. Farr released the following statement:

"Rep. Gutierrez's bill includes a number of important provisions. The legislation includes language that will advance our efforts to secure our borders, protect our ports of entry and combat criminal activity.

"The legislation also includes language to establish an employment verification system, reform our badly flawed visa system, create an earned path to legalization for undocumented individuals who follow our laws and contribute to our society, and create mechanisms to use the immigration process to boost our economic outlook.

"One piece of the bill that's very important for California is the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act, known as AgJOBS. Among other things, this bipartisan provision confers temporary legal status to undocumented individuals who have worked in the ag industry for an extended period, offering the possibility of a green card if certain requirements are met.

"We on the Central Coast know the importance of our ag workers, and we have come to realize that forcing these individuals to work in the shadows of American law is not a sustainable practice.

"The bill includes many other important provisions, from the DREAM Act, which opens a path to citizenship for young students who have led productive lives, to the Proud to be an

American Citizen Act, a bill I have authored that aims to promote the legal citizenship process as a central part of the American experience.

"I look forward to working closely with Rep. Gutierrez and other members of Congress, as well as the president, to get this bill passed. Both parties agree that we need to reform our immigration system. This bill is a powerful first step to get us there."

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